



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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In reply, please refer to:
File:

House Committee on Finance

March 29, 2012

**Testimony of Loretta J. Fuddy, A.C.S.W., M.P.H.
Director of Health**

SB2818 HD1, Relating to Disposition of Dead Human Bodies

1 **Department's Position:** Supports

2 **Fiscal Implications:** None

3 **Purpose and Justification:**

4 The Department of Health strongly supports Senate Bill 2818 HD1, Relating to Disposition of Dead
5 Human Bodies. This proposal is part of Governor Abercrombie's Administrative Bills package and
6 supports the New Day Agenda's goal of transforming government.

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8 SB2818 HD1 has two main goals:

- 9 1. Remove from statute the authority to donate or receive unclaimed dead human bodies for
10 medical education and research purposes, and
11 2. Clarify roles and responsibilities in the handling of human bodies eligible for burial or cremation
12 at public expense.

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1 Unclaimed corpses are exceptionally rare, perhaps one or two every few years. Current Hawaii Revised
2 Statutes permit the donation of unclaimed corpses to institutions for medical education and research
3 purposes. Despite the practical value to education and research, this practice does not enhance or protect
4 the dignity of either the institution or the decedent, who had no choice in the matter, nor does it reflect
5 contemporary community standards of practice. The University of Hawaii has confirmed their policy
6 that only willfully expressed and documented anatomical gifts are accepted so access to medical
7 cadavers will not be affected.

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9 In the event a corpse is unclaimed by relatives, friends, or any other legally responsible party it becomes
10 eligible for burial or cremation at public expense. SB2818 HD1 consolidates the process in the
11 Department of Human Services, with whom DOH collaborated to develop this bill, where previously it
12 spanned both departments. Improvements in efficiency, record keeping, and customer services are
13 expected.

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15 The Department of Health respectfully urges this committee to pass Senate Bill 2818 HD1.

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17 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.
